

REMARKS

In response to the pending Office Action, Applicants have cancelled claim 4, without prejudice, in order to overcome the objection as being a substantial duplicate of claim 5. No new matter has been added.

For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are allowable.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahashi (JP 2002-348693) in view of Yano (USP No. 6,235,428) and Noya (JP 2001-015106). The instant application claims priority to JP 2002-030515, which has a filing date of February 7, 2002, and this priority document supports the subject matter set forth in the pending claims. As the effective filing date thereof predates the publication date of Takahashi, which is December 4, 2002, it is respectfully submitted that Takahashi does not constitute valid prior art to the instant application. A certified English translation of JP 2002-030515 is being filed concurrently with this Amendment in order to perfect the claim of priority. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the § 103 rejection based on Takahashi in view of Yano and Noya must be withdrawn.

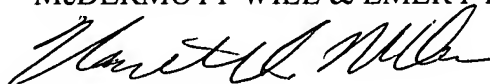
Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited.

Application No.: 10/500,899

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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